

? 12 Sep 1970 file

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Afternoon Report on the Hijacking Situation

The following are the major developments on the hijacking situation since I informed you of the destruction of the aircraft this morning.

The Passengers

Our embassy in Amman is able to confirm that all of the passengers were off the hijacked aircraft when they were blown up and that none were apparently injured by the explosions. The PFLP has announced that all except forty of the passengers, have been released and are free to leave Jordan. The remaining forty hostages are identified in press reports as 23 Israelis or dual Israeli/U.S. nationals, including five Israeli women; 6 Swiss; 6 West Germans and 5 British nationals.

We do not know where the PFLP is holding the forty remaining hostages, although according to some reports they have been taken into the desert outside of Amman. The embassy, however, is able to confirm that the other passengers have arrived in Amman and plans are being made to evacuate them from the country as soon as possible. We have no reports of any additional evacuation flights today.

The Negotiations

There is still confusion as to precisely what demands the fedayeen are making at this point for the release of the remaining forty hostages. This stems in large part from the lack of any effective control over the fedayeen collectively or individually.

Just prior to the destruction of the hijacked aircraft the high command of the fedayeen movement modified their demands to read as follows:

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-2-

- "a. Swiss citizens (with the exception of those listed below) and the Swiss aircraft would be released in return for the release of the three fedayeen held by the Swiss Government.
- b. British citizens (with the exception of those listed below) to be released in return for the release of Leila Khalid and the body of her companion.
- c. German passengers (with the exceptions listed below) will be released in return for the three fedayeen held in Germany.
- d. All Americans (with the exceptions below) will be released.
- e. Exceptions to the above are: six Swiss passengers, six UK passengers and six German passengers to be held as hostages until the respective fedayeen counters arrive in Amman. Israelis of 'military status' and dual nationals of 'Israeli military status' to be hostage pending agreement on the exchange of prisoners with the Government of Israel."

In addition, the Red Cross representatives were informed that the fedayeen intention was "that the respective Governments should make a choice of hostages."

On the basis of these demands, the Red Cross representatives told the fedayeen high command the Red Cross was withdrawing from its negotiating role and were leaving Amman immediately. They could not, said the Red Cross, negotiate the release of the hostages on a country-by-country basis. Later on a Red Cross representative told a joint UK-U.S.-German embassy meeting that the Red Cross would not be a participant in a "blackmail" deal or serve as an intermediary in deals with separate countries.

Our charge in Amman has persuaded the Red Cross representatives to stay on in Amman until the governments have had time to react and consult in Bern.

The charge notes that his impression is that the Red Cross move is partly tactical and they may hope it will pressure the PFLP -- the controlling element of the fedayeen -- into a more acceptable position. He feels, however, that as a result of this development the solidarity of the five

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-3-

powers may be coming apart, at least in Amman. The Germans especially seem nervous than before and Chancellor Brandt's special emissary, despite our demarche, has arrived in Amman and has already been talking privately with the fedayeen leaders. The German charge, moreover, says he thinks that the presence of this individual signals an early German decision to go it alone. The Swiss, of course, are holding firm and are taking the position that no evacuation should take place at present.

#### Situation in Amman

As of late this afternoon Amman was quiet but tense. During the day there were only a few exchanges of light weapons fire. This may only, however, be the calm before the storm since King Hussein reportedly intends to bring sizeable units of the Jordan Army into Amman within the next several days to insure implementation of the cease-fire agreement. This decision, [REDACTED] is based on two main considerations: (a) the fact that the army will not be satisfied with another paper agreement which is not implemented; and (b) the fact that Hussein does not believe, despite the present relative quiet, the fedayeen can or will satisfactorily implement the agreement.

Although he may have no alternative if he is to continue to rule, the obvious danger with Hussein's plan is that it could very easily trigger the bloody and destructive showdown with the fedayeen that he has been trying so hard to avoid. [REDACTED] the King's chief advisers are cautioning him against such a drastic move in the expectation that the fedayeen can be induced and pressured to implement the recent agreement. But the King's patience is almost at an end, and despite their efforts, they doubt he can or will compromise. He will have to consider -- as last June -- whether to hold his move until after all the hostages from the hijacked aircraft are released and evacuated from Amman, since otherwise their lives would be in danger.

~~SECRET~~